Exemplary Foundations Concerning the Beautiful Names and Attributes of Allaah

Imaam Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (d.1421H)

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Version 1.0

The Commendation of Imaam 'Abdul-'Azeez Ibn Baaz:

Shaykhul-Islaam 'Abdul-'Azeez Ibn 'Abdullaah Ibn Baaz (d.1420H) – *rahimahullaah* – said,

"The praise is for Allaah and may the peace and greetings be upon the Messenger of Allaah and upon his Family and whosoever is guided by his guidance. To proceed:

So indeed, I have reviewed the valuable book that was written by the possessor of excellence, our brother, al-'Allaamah, Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen concerning the Names and Attributes. He named it *al-Qawaa'idul-Muthlaa fee Sifaatillaahi wa Asmaa'ihil-Husnaa*. I have listened to it from its beginning to its end, so he wrote an illustrious book. Indeed, it contains a clarification of the creed of the *Salafus-Saalih* in the Names and Attributes. Likewise, it comprises of great foundations and collective benefits concerning the topic of the Names and Attributes.

He clarified the meaning of *al-Ma'iyyah* (Allaah's being with His creation in knowledge, whilst being above His Throne in His Essence) that is mentioned in the Book of Allaah the Mighty and Majestic in a specific and general sense according to *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*. Verily it is the truth in reality, it does not require a blend or mixture of the two creations. Rather, He is the One free from all imperfections, above His Throne, as He has informed about Himself, and as is connected to His Majesty. It only necessitates His knowledge, congnizance and acquaintance with them, and that He listens to their statements and movements, and He sees their conditions and situations, and He preserves and watches over His Messengers and His believing *awliyaa'* (close allies), and He grants them victory and success to other than that from whatever relates to the general and particular *ma'iyyah*. It contains sublime meanings and realities that Allaah the Glorified has affirmed for Himself.

Likewise, this book comprises of an opposition to the statement of the people of *ta'teel* (denial), *tashbeeh* (resemblance) and *tamtheel* (likening), and the people of *al-Hulool wal-Ittihaad* (incarnation and union between Allaah and His creation).

So may Allaah increase him in goodness and increase him and us in knowledge, guidance and success. May Allaah benefit all of the Muslims by reading his book. Verily He is the best Disposer for that and well-capable of it. So may the peace and greetings of Allaah be upon our Prophet Muhammad and His Family and His Companions.

Stated by the one needy of Allaah the Exalted:
'Abdul-'Azeez Ibn 'Abdullaah Ibn Baaz
Head of the Department of Knowledge-Based Research,
Religious Verdicts, Call and Guidance. 5/11/1404H."

Introduction:

The praise is for Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and ask for His forgiveness. We repent to Him and seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our selves and from the evils of our sinful deeds. Whosoever Allaah guides, then none can misguide him; and whomsoever Allaah allows to be led astray, then there is no guide for him. I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship besides Allaah alone without any associate; and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. May the perfect and complete greetings of Allaah be upon him, his Family, his Companions and whosoever follows him in goodness. To proceed:

So *eemaan* (faith) in the Names and Attributes of Allaah is one of the pillars of faith in Allaah the Exalted, and that consists of faith in the *wujood* (existence) of Allaah, faith in His *ruboobiyyah* (lordship), faith in His *uloohiyyah* (divinity) and faith in His Names and Attributes.

THE STATUS THAT THE RELIGION HAS GIVEN TO KNOWING THE NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAAH:[1]

So *Tawheed* of the Names and Attributes of Allaah is one of the three categories of *Tawheed*, they are: *Tawheedur-Ruboobiyyah*, *Tawheedul-Uloohiyyah* and *Tawheedul-Asmaa' was-Sifaat*. So the status of *Tawheedul-Asmaa' was-Sifaat* in the Religion is uppermost and of the utmost importance. It is not possible for anyone to worship Allaah in a complete way, until he has acquired knowledge of the Names and Attributes of Allaah the Exalted, in order to worship Him upon insight (*baseerah*). Allaah the Exalted said,

"And Allaah has Beautiful Names, so call upon Him by them." [Sooratul-A'raaf 180]

So this consists of *du'aa'ul-mas'alah* (supplication of request) and *du'aa'ul-'ibaadah* (supplication of worship).[2] So *du'aa'ul-mas'alah* is that you in front of your request that which befits the occasion from the Names of Allaah the Exalted, such as when you say, 'O

[1] This is a heading that we have added for the purpose of clarity.
[2] Refer to *Badaa'i'ul-Fawaa'id* (1/164) and *Madaarijus-Saalikeen* (1/23-24).

Ghafoor (Oft-Forgiving), forgive me,' and 'O Raheem (Bestower of Mercy), bestow mercy upon me,' and 'O Hafeedh (Preserver), preserve me,' and the likes of that.[3]

And *du'aa'ul-'ibaadah* is that you worship Allaah the Exalted by the necessary requirement of these Names. So you repent to Him because He is at-Tawwaab (the One who accepts repentance), and you remember Him by your tongue because He is as-Samee' (the All-Hearing). You worship Him through your limbs because He is al-Baseer (the All-Seeing), and you fear Him in secrecy because He is al-Lateeful-Khabeer (the Kind, the All-Informed) and so on.

So due to this status of *Tawheedul-Asmaa' was-Sifaat*, and due to the people speaking about it with truth in some occasions, and with falsehood which emanates due to either ignorance or bigotry (*ta'assub*) upon other occasions; I decided to write whatever was easy concerning it from the widespread foundations, hoping from Allaah the Exalted that He makes this action of mine a sincere effort seeking His Face, being in agreement with His pleasure and beneficial for His servants. So I have named it *al-Qawaa'idul-Muthlaa fee Sifaatillaahi Ta'aalaa wa Asmaa'ihil-Husnaa*.

The First Foundation: All the Names of Allaah the Exalted are Beautiful[4]

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[3] BENEFIT: Stated al-Haafidh Ibnul-Qayyim (d.751H) – *rahimahullaah*, "It is to ask concerning every request by a Name that is a necessary requirement of that request, so that the questioner may reach out to Him by that Name. Whomsoever reflects upon the supplications of the Messengers will find them to be in conformity to that..." He also said, "The questioner comes with a Name that the request requires in order to be fulfilled, such as when you say, 'Forgive me and bestow mercy upon me. Verily You are the All-Forgiving, the Bestower of Mercy.' So it is not proper for the occasion that you say, '...Verily You are the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.'" Refer to *Badaa'i'ul-Fawaa'id* (1/160-164). And Aboo Bakr Ibnul-'Arabee al-Maalikee (d.532H) – *rahimahullaah* – said, "He requests by every Name whatever is connected to it. You say, 'O Raheem (Bestower of Mercy), bestow mercy upon me. O Hakeem (All-Wise), bestow wisdom upon me. O Razzaaq (Self-Sufficient), sustain me. O Haadee (Guider) guide me.' So if you were to supplicate with a general Name, you would have said, 'O Maalik (Master), bestow mercy upon me. O 'Azeez (Mighty), grant me wisdom. O Lateef, sustain me.' If you supplicate by the greatest Name, you say, 'O Allaah,' since it represents every Name in accordance to whatever was explained in the Eternal Book. So you do not say, 'O Razzaaq, guide me,' except if you mean, 'O Razzaaq, sustain me with Your Guidance.' So this is how your supplication must be arranged, according to your creed, so that you will be from amongst the beneficient ones if Allaah wills." Refer to *Ahkaamul-Qur'aan* (2/815-816).

[4] This foundation was mentioned by al-Haafidh Ibnul-Qayyim in *al-Badaa'i'ul-Fawaa'id* (1/163), so he said, "Eleventh, all of His Names are Beautiful. There is not a Name amongst them having that as its basis. Indeed, there has preceded from His Names that which applies to Him as an action, such as al-Khaaliq (the Creator), ar-Raaziq (the Sustainer), al-Muhyee (the One who gives Life) and al-Mumeet (the One who gives Death). So this proves that all of His actions are genuinely good, not having any evil in them, because if He had performed evil, then He would have a derivative of that in a Name and then all of His Names would not be Beautiful, and that is falsehood. So evil is not to be attributed to Him. So just as it does not enter into His Attributes, it cannot be connected to His Essence, nor does it enter into His Actions. So evil is not to be attributed to Him, nor is it to be attributed to Him in action or description. It can only enter into the objects upon whom His Actions are performed and there is a difference between an action and the object to which the action is done. So the evil occurring within the objects upon whom His Action is performed is different than it occurring within He Himself, nor in His Action. So reflect upon this, since it has been hidden from many of the theorists and their feet have slipped in regards to it and the understandings have

This is to say that they reach the utmost limits of beauty. Allaah the Exalted said,

"And Allaah has Beautiful Names." [Sooratul-A'raaf 7:180]

That is because the Attributes demonstrate absolute perfection, they do not possess any defect at all, neither in probability (of defectiveness), nor in implication. An example of this is that al-Hayy (the Ever-Living) is a Name from the Names of Allaah the Exalted demonstrating perfect life which was not preceded by absence, nor is it followed up by a death. Such life necessitates perfection for the Attributes such as Knowledge (*'ilm*), Capability (*qudrah*), Hearing (*sama'*), sight (*basr*) and other than them. Another example is that al-'Aleem is a Name from the Names of Allaah demonstrating perfect knowledge which is not proceeded by ignorance, nor is it followed up by forgetfulness. Allaah the Exalted said,

"Knowledge of it is with my Lord, in a Book. My Lord is not unaware, nor does He forget." [Soorah Taa Haa 20:52]

The Knowledge (*'ilm*) is comprehensive and it encompasses everything generally and specifically, whether it be related to His Actions or the actions of His creation. Allaah the Exalted said,

"And with Him are the keys to the Unseen, none knows of it besides Him. And He knows whatever is upon the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf falls, except that He knows of it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything flesh or dry, except that it is written in a Clear Record." [Sooratul-An'aam 6:59]

"And there is no living creature upon the earth, except that Allaah provides its sustenance. And He knows of its temporary place and permanent abode. All of it is in a Clear Record." [Soorah Hood 11:6]
"He knows whatever is in the heavens and the earth, and He knows whatever you hide in secrecy and whatever you do openly. And He knows whatever is within the chests." [Sooratut-Taghaabun 64:4]

The third example is that ar-Rahmaan (the Most Merciful) is a Name from the Names of Allaah the Exalted demonstrating perfect mercy about which the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Allaah has more mercy towards His servants than this woman has towards her son."[5] Meaning, the mother of the child found it in captivity, so

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gone astray. So Allaah guided the people of the truth where they differed by His permission. And Allaah guides whomever He wills to the Straight Path." Refer also to *Majmoo'ul-Fataawaa* (8/94-96) of Shaykhul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah.

[5] Related by al-Bukhaaree (no. 5999) and Muslim (no. 2754). This is from the *hadeeth* of 'Umar Ibnul-Khattaab – *radiyallaahu 'anhu* – who said, "A prisoner group came before the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). So a woman was searching for her child, so when she found here child there, she brought him close to her stomach and breast-fed him. So the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Could you see this woman casting her son into the Fire?" We said, 'No by Allaah, not as long as she is

she took it away, placed it close to her stomach and breast-fed it. It is also demonstrative of the vast mercy about which Allaah said,

"And My mercy encompasses everything." [Sooratul-A'raaf 7:56]

And He said about the supplication of the Angels for the Believers,

"Our Lord encompasses everything in mercy and knowledge." [Soorah Ghaafir 40:7]

The beauty of the Names of Allaah the Exalted can be expressed through every Name by itself, and it can be expressed by combining it with other than itself. So by combining a Name with another, perfection upon perfection is achieved.[6] An example of that is al-'Azeezul-Hakeem (the Mighty, the Wise), since Allaah the Exalted combines these Names in many places within the *Qur'aan*. So each of the two represents a particular type of perfection that is a necessary requirement of the other. So it is *al-'izzah* (might) in al-'Azeez (the Mighty) and *al-hukm* (judgement) and *al-hikmah* (wisdom) in al-Hakeem (the Wise). So combining between the two represents another form of perfection; it is that the *'izzah* of Allaah the Exalted is coupled with Wisdom (*hikmah*). So His *'izzah* (might) does not necessitate oppression, tyranny and evil actions, as is the case with the mighty ones from amongst the creation, since the mighty ones from amongst them use their *'izzah* for sin. So he oppresses, tyrannizes and conducts evil behaviour. Likewise, the *hukm* and *hikmah* of Allaah the Exalted is coupled with perfect might, contrary to the *hukm* and *hikmah* of the creation, since they are afflicted with disgrace.

THE SECOND FOUNDATION: THE NAMES OF ALLAAH THE EXALTED ARE TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS:[7]

Titles refer to the Essence and descriptions refer to the meanings.[8] So with respect to the first category, they are *mutaraadifah*: being that they all refer to one thing, and that is Allaah

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capable of preventing it.' So the Messenger of Allaah (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Allaah has more mercy towards His servants than this woman has towards her son."

[6] BENEFIT: Stated al-Haafidh Ibnul-Qayyim (d.751H) – *rahimahullaah* - in *al-Badaa'i'* (1/161), "In this manner, when the Names and Attributes that are found in the *Qur'aan* are combined. So al-Ghanee (the Self-Sufficient) is an Attribute of perfection and al-Hameed (the One deserving of all praise) is likewise; but the combination of al-Ghanee with al-Hameed amounts to another form of perfection. So He is praised for His Self-Sufficiency (*ghinaa*), He is praised for His praiseworthiness (*hamd*) and He is praised for the combination of the two. Likewise, al-'Afuwwul-Qadeer (the Pardoner, the Omnipotent), al-Hameedul-Majeed (the One deserving of all praise, the Magnificent) and al-'Azeezul-Hakeem (the Mighty, the Wise). So reflect upon it, since it is from the noblest areas of knowledge.

[7] This principle was mentioned by al-Haafidh Ibnul-Qayyim (d.751H) in *al-Badaa'i'* (1/162). So he said, "Fourthly, that His Beautiful Names are titles and descriptions. And their descriptor does not negate the title, contrary to the descriptions of the servants, since it contradicts their titles, because their descriptions are concurrent. So they negate the titles, which are specialized, contrary to the descriptions of Allaah the Exalted."

[8] Refer to *al-Badaa'i'* (1/163).

the Mighty and Majestic. And with respect to the second category, they are *mutabaayinah*: being that they all have a specific meaning. So al-Hayy (the Ever-Living), al-'Aleem (the All-Knowing), al-Qadeer (the Omnipotent), as-Samee' (the All-Hearing), al-Baseer (the All-Seeing), ar-Rahmaan (the Most Merciful), ar-Raheem (the Bestower of Mercy), al-'Azeez (the All-Mighty) and al-Hakeem (the All-Wise); all of them are Names that refer to one thing and that is Allaah the Glorified and Exalted. However, the meaning of al-Hayy is not the meaning of al-'Aleem, and the meaning of al-'Aleem is not the meaning of al-Qadeer and so on. So we say that they are titles and descriptions due to the *Qur'aan* indicating that, just as it is found in the statement of Allaah the Exalted,

"And He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Bestower of Mercy." [Sooratul-Ahqaaf 46:8]

And there occurs the statement of Allaah,

"And you Lord is the Oft-Forgiving, the Possessor of Mercy." [Sooratul-Kahf 18:58]

So the second *aayah* can be described with mercy. The people of language and custom have a consensus (*ijmaa'*) upon the fact that only one who has knowledge can be described with knowledge and only one who hears can be called a hearer, and only one who sees can be described with sight. And this is an affair that is too evident to be in need of a proof. So with this, the misguidance of those who deprive the Names of Allaah the Exalted of their meanings becomes known. Such are the people of *ta'teel* (denial) who say, 'Allaah the Exalted is the All-Hearer without hearing and the All-Seeing without sight and the Mighty without might,' and so on. And their justification for this reasoning is that affirming multiple Attributes necessitates multiple deities. This is a sickening justification. Rather, it is fatal, because the indications of *sama'* (hearing) and *'aql* (intellect) prove its falsehood. As for hearing, then that is because Allaah the Exalted has described Himself with many descriptions, along with maintaining the fact that He is uniquely One. So Allaah the Exalted said,

"Verily the Punishment of your Lord is severe. Verily it is He who begins and repeats. And He is Oft-Forgiving, full of love, possessor of the Glorious Throne. He does whatever He wills." [Sooratul-Burooj 85:12-16]

And Allaah the Exalted said,

"Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Exalted. Who has created everything and then proportioned it. And who has measured, then guided, and who brings out the pasturage, and makes it dark stubble." [Sooratul-A'laa 87:1-5]

So in these noble *aayaat* are many descriptors for one thing being described, yet this does not necessitate affirming multiple deities. As for the intellect, then that is because the Attributes themselves are not separate from the one being described to the extent that they would necessitate affirming multiple deities. They are from the attributes of whoever is

characterized by them. So they are dependant upon him. And it is inevitable that everything in existence must have multiple attributes. So it has the attribute of existence (*wujood*), and its affair can either be *waajibul-wujood* (obligatory existence) or *mumkinul-wujood* (possible existence). And its affair can be individually dependant upon itself, or it can be a description for other than itself. So with this as well, it becomes known that *ad-Dahr* (time) is not from the Names of Allaah the Exalted, because an inanimate name cannot guarantee a meaning befitting for the Beautiful Names, and because it is a name of moment and age. Allaah the Exalted said about the resurrection of the evil ones,

"And they say, 'There is nothing except our life in this world. We live and we die and nothing destroys us except ad-Dahr (time).' And they have no knowledge of it, they only conjecture." [Sooratul-Jaathiyah 45:24]

They were referring to the passing of the day and night. So as for the statement of the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), 'Allaah the Mighty and Majestic said, 'The son of Aadam wrongs Me. He curses the time (*ad-Dahr*), yet I am the time. The affair is in My Hands, I turn the night and the day."[9] So this does not mean that *ad-Dahr* (time) is from the Names of Allaah the Exalted. That is because those who curse the time only intend the time that is the place of events, they do not intend Allaah the Exalted. So the meaning of His statement, 'And I am the time,' is explained by His statement, 'The affair is in My Hands, I turn the night and the day.' So Allaah the Exalted created the time and whatever it contains, and He clarified that He turns the night and the day and the two of them are the time. So with this it becomes clear that it is impossible for *ad-Dahr* in this *hadeeth* to be referring to Allaah the Exalted.[10]

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[9] Related by al-Bukhaaree (no. 8491) and Muslim (no. 2246), from the *hadeeth* of Abee Hurayrah (*radiyallaahu 'anhu*).

[10] BENEFIT: Stated al-Khattaabee (d.388H) – *rahimahullaah*, "It means, 'I am the possessor of time and the Manager of the affairs which you curse as time. So whosoever curses time due to the one who runs the affairs, his curse comes back to Me, since I am the doer. I made it a receptacle for the occurrence of affairs.' It was from the customs of the people of *jaahiliyyah* (pre-Islaamic ignorance), that if severe difficulty or something disliked from an affair afflicted them, they would associate it with time and curse it. So they would say, 'How evil is the time,' or 'May the time be destroyed,' and the likes of that from statements. There fore, they did not affirm *ruboobiyyah* (lordship) for Allaah, nor did they know time to be a creator. Indeed, Allaah mentioned that from their statement when they said,
"And nothing has destroyed us, except ad-Dahr (time)." [Sooratul-Jaathiyah 45:24]
So due to this, they were called, *ad-Duhriyyah*, and they held that time was eternal having no beginning. So Allaah the Exalted knew that time was initiated, He turned the night and the day, with time not having any part in anything in terms of action related to good or evil. However, it is a receptacle for events and a place for their occurrence, and all of their affairs are in the Hands of Allaah the Exalted. And He Himself is their Originator, Producer and Refiner, the Glorified having no partner," *A'laamul-Hadeeth* (3/1904). Stated al-Haafidh Ibnul-Qayyim, "So the cursor of time inevitably revolves around two circumstances: he either curses Allaah, or commits *Shirk* with Him. So if He believes that *ad-Dahr* is a doer along with Allaah, then he is a *mushrik* (one who commits *Shirk*). If he believes that it is Allaah alone who did that, and he still curses the one who did that, then he curses Allaah," *al-Badaa'i'ul-Fawaa'id* (1/164).

IF THE NAMES OF ALLAAH ARE TRANSITIVE, THEY FALL UNDER THREE AFFAIRS: FIRSTLY, AFFIRMING THAT NAME FOR ALLAAH THE MIGHTY AND MAJESTIC; SECONDLY, AFFIRMING THE ATTRIBUTE CONTAINED IN THAT NAME OF ALLAAH THE MIGHTY AND MAJESTIC; THIRDLY, AFFIRMING ITS RULING AND NECESSARY REQUIREMENT:

Due to this, the people of knowledge have allowed overlooking the punishment for the highway robbers who repent, using as proof the statement of Allaah the Exalted,

"As for those who repented before they fell into your power, then know that Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, the Bestower of Mercy." [Sooratul-Maa'idah 5:34]

This is because the necessary requirement of these two Names is that Allaah the Exalted has forgiven them of their sins and bestowed mercy upon them by overlooking the prescribed punishment from them. An example of that is as-Samee' (the All-Hearing) which requires [i] affirming as-Samee' as a Name of Allaah the Exalted; [ii] and affirming *as-sama'* (hearing) as an Attribute for Him; [iii] and affirming the ruling and necessary requirement of that.[11] And it is that He hears whatever is secret and confidential, as Allaah the Exalted said,

"And Allaah hears the dispute between you both. Verily Allaah is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing." [Sooratul-Mujaadilah 58:1]

AND IF THEY ARE NOT TRANSITIVE, THEY FALL INTO TWO CIRCUMSTANCES: FIRSTLY, AFFIRMING THAT NAME FOR ALLAAH THE MIGHTY AND MAJESTIC; SECONDLY, AFFIRMING THE ATTRIBUTE THAT THIS NAME OF ALLAAH THE MIGHTY AND MAJESTIC NECESSITATES:

An example of this is al-Hayy, which requires affirming al-Hayy as a Name of Allaah the Mighty and Majestic and affirming life as an Attribute of Him.

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[11] Translator's Note: Stated Imaam Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (d.1421H) – *rahimahullaah* – in his book, *Sharh Lumu'atul-I'tiqaad* (p. 23), "The meaning of each of Allaah's Names applies to [i] Allaah Himself; [ii] the Attribute that such a Name implies, and; [iii] the effect of such an attribute, if it is transitive. Faith in Allaah's Names cannot be complete without affirming all of this. An example of those names that are not transitive is the Name al-'Adheem (The Most Great). One's faith is not complete until he believes that it is a name of Allaah whose meaning applies to Him Himself, as well as the attribute that it encompasses, which is His magnificence (*'adhamah*). An example of a name that is transitive is ar-Rahmaan (the Most Merciful). One's faith is not complete until he believes that it is a name of Allaah that applies to: [i] Himself; [ii] the attribute that it encompasses, which is his mercy, and; [iii] what results from that, which is that he grants mercy to whom He wills.